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Democratic Germany Welcomes
"SACK ARMIES" PLAN

The Government and people of the German Democratic Republic have given a warm welcome to the Soviet plan to abolish all armies in all countries within four years, which was laid before the United Nations by Soviet Premier Khrushchov on September 19th.

President Wilhelm Pieck said "This plan is in full accord with the wishes of the people of the German Democratic Republic. It would mean the end for all time of war, the greatest shame of mankind."

Deputy Prime Minister Walter Ulbricht stressed that the German people were particularly interested in the plan, since it was in Germany that the greatest danger of the outbreak of a new war existed.

ARMS STOP MOOTED FOR GERMANY
Five-Point Plan Proposed for Two German States

A five-point plan for an arms stop in Germany which would contribute towards disarmament and a general relaxation of tension was proposed by the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, meeting in Berlin on September 18th and 19th.

The plan foresees that the governments of the two German states should agree on the following points:

1. Ending of all experiments with nuclear weapons, including West German participation in French nuclear weapon experiments in the Sahara.

2. Both German states should renounce atomic arms, and give their support to the establishment of an atom-free zone.

3. Both German states agree on an immediate arms stop, conclude a non-aggression pact, and negotiate on the number, armament, and stationing of their respective armed forces.

4. Both German states urge the withdrawal, step-by-step, of all foreign forces from Germany.

5. Representatives of the two German states establish an All-German Committee on a parity basis to prepare a peace treaty and create the conditions for German reunification.

Laying this five-point plan before the meeting of the Central Committee, Walter Ulbricht stated:

"If Khrushchov, as representative of a Communist state, can negotiate with Eisenhower, as representative of a capitalist state, then it should also be possible for the prime ministers and governments of the two German states to negotiate with each other.

"The Germans could make an important contribution to international peace if they would act jointly on these questions, despite differences in the social order."

Turning to the question of West Berlin, Walter Ulbricht stated that it would be a very good thing if Khrushchov and Eisenhower could reach agreement on a provisional settlement for West Berlin. "We understand very well that the West Berlin problem cannot be solved all at once: it is a question of development . . . It would be useful if the Government of the German Democratic Republic and the West Berlin Senate were to negotiate on a normalisation of relations."

BRITISH FILM CENSOR BANS TRUTH

See page 161

W. GERMANY AND THE BOMB

"Daily Herald" Man Sees For Himself

West Germany is giving France active help in developing nuclear weapons, London "Daily Herald" Correspondent Gilbert Carter stated on September 14th. He had just made a special visit to West Germany at the invitation of the West German Government, which had been upset by his charges that Bonn was helping De Gaulle to build an A-bomb.

Writing in his paper September 14th and 15th, Gilbert Carter stated:

"I have just returned from West Germany, more convinced than ever that the Germans are the silent partners in France's A-bomb project . . .

"Remember, a month ago I revealed that German scientists — some of them worked for Hitler — were installed at French atom research stations.

"Remember, my allegations caused an uproar in both Bonn and Paris.

"Remember, I received an invitation from Bonn to go to West Germany to check my allegations.

"And remember that I did not get an invitation from France . . . So I went to Bonn. There I talked to high-ranking scientists, civil servants and politicians."

Mr Carter then quoted a long series of non-productive questions and answers, and continued:

"And that's how it went. Nothing concrete. But odd phrases here and there strengthened my opinion that France and Germany have been working together on a bomb.

"When did the Germans first come in? Long before I made my accusations on August 11th there were reports of German scientists working at Saclay (one of the main French atom stations, ed. DGR). These reports have not, even now, been denied . . .

"A German plane flew me from Bonn to Alsace. There, with the agreement of the French Government, I was shown the St. Louis ballistic research station, run jointly by West Germany and France . . . Nearly all the scientists working there are German. Some have become naturalised Frenchmen. At the start they worked completely under French control. Then, when Germany was allowed to rearm, Bonn bought an interest in the establishment.

"Germany's Ministry of Defence denied that St. Louis was shared with the French as a rocket-research station. It was merely a 'ballistic institute' I was assured.

"But I have seen for myself — and I must contradict the Ministry.

"True enough, it is concerned with the ballistic problems of conventional weapons. And it does not design atom weapons. But I saw models of surface-to-air guided missiles . . . being tested in a wind-tunnel. And models of an anti-tank rocket. Elsewhere there were models of big intercontinental rockets.

"I was told that the station has nothing to do with the design or production of these rockets — that it is only concerned with wind-tunnel tests.

"But that is research on rockets . . .

"The West Germans are bound by treaty not to manufacture nuclear weapons. My case is that, while observing that treaty to the letter, it is still possible for them to learn the business. And I think they are learning it . . ."

Minister Makes Rail Invention

Railway carriages and trucks from west and central Europe will in future be able to run on the wider-gauge Soviet railway lines, thanks to an important new invention just perfected by Erwin Kramer, Transport Minister of the German Democratic Republic.

Through railway traffic between the Soviet Union and the rest of Europe has hitherto been impossible, owing to the fact that the Soviet railways have a broad 5ft gauge, while most other European railways have a gauge 4ft 8½ inches. The new invention equips vehicles with adjustable axles which automatically change gauge when the frontier is passed.

The first train equipped with the new invention, which will save millions of pounds yearly obviating manhandling of goods and transshipment of passengers at the frontier stations, left Berlin for a trial run to the Soviet Union on September 9th.

The inventor, Erwin Kramer, is himself son of an engine driver. He joined the Communist Party in 1929, and fought in the International Brigade in Spain.

Oil Pipeline Details Announced

Latest details on the pipeline which will bring approximately 5 million tons of petroleum a year to the German Democratic Republic were made public late in August. The pipeline, starting at the big oil-fields near Kuibyshev on the Volga, will stretch across European Russia and White Russia and then divide into two arms, one supplying Czechoslovakia and Hungary, the other branching through Poland and terminating at Schwedt near the Oder River in Democratic Germany

The total length of the pipeline will be almost 2500 miles and more than 20 stations will pump the petroleum automatically along its route. The difficult job of laying the pipes at least 6 feet deep in the earth will last from three to four years, and will be planned and financed by each of the five countries for the sector on their own territory; each sector of pipeline will belong to the country through which it goes.

The German Democratic Republic has already begun building a large refining complex near the future terminal at Schwedt. The oil will be used for fuel and for the chemical industry and will thus free large amounts of lignite (soft coal) hitherto needed for these purposes.

IN MEMORY OF THE MURDERED WOMEN OF RAVENSBRUECK CAMP

Italian survivors of Ravensbrueck Concentration Camp lay flowers on the Memorial

The statue of a woman prisoner helping a comrade which dominates the Memorial

Democratic Germany paid tribute to the memory of nazi concentration camp victims on September 12th when an impressive memorial was opened on the site Ravensbrueck Camp, where 92,000 women from all European countries were murdered.

Guests of honour at the ceremony were many hundreds of women from 20 different countries who had survived the camp, and there were many touching scenes as former camp inmates, mostly grey-haired now, met each other for the first time since liberation.

The Ravensbrueck Memorial is one of a series of memorials to be erected in the German Democratic Republic at the sites of the main nazi concentration camps, both to honour the dead and to warn the younger generation never to allow such crimes to be committed again. The funds to build the memorials have been raised by voluntary subscription. The first of the series of monuments was erected last year at Buchenwald.

On September 12th at Ravensbrueck, more than 50,000 people from all parts of the Republic joined with 2000 foreign delegates in pledging themselves to fight against fascism and war, and especially against the danger presented by aggressive German militarism.

The memorial at Ravensbrueck consists of one wall of the camp, with memorial stones for the different nations whose representatives were shot, gassed, poisoned and starved here; the crematorium; and an impressive statue facing towards the lake which bordered the camp, and into which the ashes of the victims were dumped.

Speakers at the ceremony recalled the fact that many of those who had been responsible for the whole ghastly concentration camp system are today back in positions of power in West Germany. One of the persons directly and personally responsible for many of the crimes committed at Ravensbrueck Camp, Dr Herta Oberheuser, is today practising as a doctor at Stocksee, near Hamburg in West Germany. During the war she carried out medical experiments on healthy camp inmates, and gave hundreds of prisoners poisoned injections.

The memorial also includes a small museum, telling of the life and struggles of the camp inmates, and showing some of the documentary evidence of the crimes committed by the SS guards. One of these documents is a long list of prisoners sent to the gas-chamber. With proverbial German pedantry the list gives the

"reason" for the gassing of the prisoner. Here are a few names selected at random from page 5 of this long list:

68,322 Sophie Wachter, Polish, age 15, suspected TB;
51,325 Klaudia Serwand, French, invalid;
94,531 Maria Golonka, Pole, mental case;
86,787 Adarka Mityova, Russian, mental, hysterical;
27,555 Genevieve Tiller, French, amputated thumb;
84,157 Yvonne Strobbe, English, suspected TB;
87,745 Arzebeth Kertesz, Hungarian Jewess, lung TB;
83,982 Germanine Korel, French, age 17, lung TB;

And so the list goes on, for page after frightful page.

The women prisoners in Ravensbrueck, as in other camps, were literally worked to death by the SS guards. They were forced to work in special factories constructed near the camp by such leading German firms as the Siemens Electrical Trust. SS documents found after liberation show that in 1944 alone the SS made a profit of 15 million marks — over £1,000,000 at that time — from the slave labour of the prisoners.

Another SS document shows that the nazis reckoned to make 1631 marks, more than £100, from each woman prisoner. The document, shown in the Ravensbrueck, shows that this profit was calculated in the following manner:

"Daily hire fee (as slave labour, ed.) 6 marks, minus 60 pfennigs for food and 10 pfennigs for clothing equals 5.30 marks.
Average life nine months — 270 x 5.30 marks = 1431 marks.
Rational utilisation of the corpse (a) gold teeth,
(b) clothing, (c) valuables,
(d) cash, minus cremation costs of 2 marks = 200 marks.
Total profit after nine months = 1631 marks, plus additional profit from utilisation of bones and ashes."

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Ravensbrueck Camp, the main nazi concentration camp for women prisoners, was built near Fuerstenberg, about 60 miles north of Berlin, at the end of 1938. A total of 132,000 prisoners were sent to the camp. 92,000 of them were killed.

East German Medals for Resistance Fighters

The Government of Democratic Germany conferred medals on 100 outstanding resistance fighters against nazism on September 12th. The men and women decorated, who came from nearly all European countries overrun by Hitler's armies, had all served long terms of imprisonment in German concentration camps.

West German Medal for V 2 Inventor

West German President Theodor Heuss awarded the highest decoration of Federal Germany on September 4th to Wernher von Braun, the man mainly responsible for the development of the V 2 rocket, which killed thousands in Britain during the closing stages of World War Two. The official citation stated that Herr Braun had been awarded the Grand Cross of the German Federal Republic for "his great services in heightening in the whole world the reputation of German science and technology".

MINERAL OIL GUSHER BURNS

A huge eruption of mineral gas shot out of the ground during boring operations near Marolterode in the southern part of the German Democratic Republic in the early morning of July 25th. The gas, erupting with a pressure of 200 atmospheres, shot the 4.5 ton boring table more than 35 feet into the air where it remained, caught in the beams of the bore tower.

After the first security measures were taken, the Government requested the help of experts from the Soviet Union, since such eruptions were completely new for the geologists of Democratic Germany. A team of three Soviet specialists arrived within 24 hours and set about getting the gas under control.

Before this could be done, the erupting tower of gas was struck by lightning on August 9th. The resulting flames shot up almost 100 feet and the melted boring tower collapsed into the hole, making the whole operation extremely difficult.

After the molten steel girders were removed, a new chemical process enabled the experts and work teams to put out the flames on August 16th, and then with the help of the assembled fire departments of the district and ten imported Soviet "water cannons", water was poured in through a second hole at the rate of more than 1200 gallons a minute. The eruption was finally brought under control on August 19th.

The whole operation was carried out without casualties of any kind.

Geologists are busy studying the whole adjacent area of Thuringia in the hopes that large supplies of mineral gas and possibly petroleum can be extracted here. Borings in several areas of West Germany near the borders of the German Democratic Republic appear to support the theory that deep-lying strata in many parts of the Republic may yield important sources of power in the future.

Consulate in Cairo

The German Democratic Republic opened a consulate general in Cairo, capital of the United Arab Republic, on September 10th. The exchange of consulates between Democratic Germany and the United Arab Republic had been agreed upon in January when Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl visited President Nasser in Cairo.

Economic Notes From Democratic Germany

Cocoa-flavoured margarine, something a little different in butter substitutes, especially for children, is now on sale in Democratic Germany.

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Vitamin B 12, in great demand in the world today, used to cost the Jenapharm pharmaceutical factory in Jena 2000 marks per gramme to produce — only 525 grammes were produced last year. A team of five scientists and five workers have worked out a system which cuts costs to 200 marks per gramme; 500 grammes are now produced every month.

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The Autumn Fair in Leipzig, specialising in consumer goods, welcomed guests from 75 countries during the week of August 30th — September 6th. Exhibitors from 45 countries showed their products, amongst them virtually all European nations and many others from Asia, Africa, America and even Australasia. Democratic Germany concluded trade deals amounting to 2,170,000,000 marks and won particular attention for its modern and tasteful textile exhibits.

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BRITISH FILM CENSOR BANS TRUTH

The British Board of Film Censors has just refused to licence a film which shows that old nazi criminals are at large and in responsible positions in West Germany today.

The film in question, "A Diary for Anne Frank", which should not be confused with an American film with a similar title, is a documentary made by DEFA, the film company of the German Democratic Republic. The film traces the history of Anne Frank, Jewish girl killed by the nazis, and shows that the people responsible for her death are living very well in West Germany today.

This film was submitted to the British Board of Film Censors. We reproduce below the correspondence on the subject between the film distribution firm "Plato Films" and the Board. This correspondence shows that the British censors insisted on the deletion of all scenes which showed nazi criminals back in circulation in West Germany.

Here are details of the specific cases mentioned in the correspondence:

1. Albert Konrad Gemmeker, Commandant of Westerbork Concentration Camp, first camp to which Anne Frank was sent. The censors demand deletion of all reference to the fact that he lives as a prosperous businessman in Dusseldorf, West Germany, today.

2. Dr Hans Globke, author of the legal commentary to the nazi anti-Semitic legislation. The censor demands deletion of all reference to the fact that Globke, today State Secretary to West German Chancellor Adenauer, administers a special fund for suborning the West German press.

3. Max Faust, one-time chief engineer of the IG Farben Works in Auschwitz Concentration Camp, where Anne Frank was later confined. The censor demands the deletion of pictures and commentary showing that Faust is working for his old firm again in West Germany.

4. Dr Otto Ambros, IG Farben chief, who was responsible for concentration camp slave labour. The censor demands the deletion of pictures of Ambros today, and even the deletion of a page from the West German Directory of Directors which shows the important posts which he holds now.

5. SS General Karl Wolff, liaison officer between Himmler and the firms which exploited slave labour in the concentration camps. The censor demands the deletion of shots of this SS General today, living a life of luxury in his big villa.

Here, in full, is the revealing correspondence between Plato Films Ltd., and the British Board of Film Censors on the subject of the film "A Diary For Anne Frank":

. . . Now Read These Letters . . .

Letter No. 1: From the British Board of Film Censors to Plato Films Ltd, on August 20th 1959:

Dear Mr. Forman,

I am writing to confirm my telephone message to you and to say this Board is prepared to issue an 'A' certificate for the film "A Diary for Anne Frank" subject to the following deletions being made: —

Reel 1. Delete the first shot of skeletons in trench — before Anne's face appears over them.

Reel 2. Delete two shots of bulldozers shovelling piles of bodies into mass grave.

Delete shots of Gemmeker walking in street. Delete dialogue "This is Gemmeker to-day", followed by "Today he is a business man in Dusseldorf", and his address.

Delete dialogue "Today Globke administers a fund . . . old Nazi authors".

Delete shots of Max Faust to-day, with dialogue "Faust went back to work . . ." and his address. The facsimile of a typed letter can be left, as it refers to the past.

Delete shots of company directory, shots of Ambros to-day, and dialogue "Ambros represents the interests . . . West German State", and his address.

Delete shots of Wolf's house with himself on the pier and dialogue "And Wolf still lives here to-day . . . West German tax-payer".

You will appreciate that in the details of dialogue to be deleted I have given only the start and finish in each case; all intervening words will have to be deleted.

If you intend to make these cuts with a view to obtaining a certificate, the entire film, with cuts made, should be resubmitted.

Yours sincerely,
John Trevelyan, Secretary.

Letter No. 2: From Plato Films Ltd. to the British Board of Film Censors, on August 21st 1959:

Dear Mr Trevelyan,

My company cannot accept your proposed deletions for the above film . . . We would, however, be grateful to learn your reasons for each of the deletions.

In many cases you appear to be asking us to delete pictures and words which are statements of fact and in no way defamatory.

For example, Mr. Gemmeker **is** a business man in Dusseldorf.

Mr. Globke **does** administer a fund.

Mr Max Faust **did** go back to work.

The company directory with the details of Mr Ambros **does** exist.

The Wolf house, shown in the film, **is** his house, and he is living there today.

In the circumstances, my company feels that for us to cut the film in the manner suggested would be little

short of an insult to the memory of Anne Frank and the millions of innocent victims who were murdered in Nazi concentration camps.

Yours sincerely,
Stanley Forman, Managing Director.

Letter No. 3: From the British Board of Film Censors to Plato Films Ltd, on August 25th 1959:

Dear Mr Forman,

Thank you for your letter of 21st August, about "A DIARY FOR ANNE'. I note that your Company cannot accept the deletions requested by the Board and intend to submit the film to the London County Council and other local authorities with a view to obtaining local licences for the film's exhibition.

As I told you on the telephone, the Board decided to maintain its policy of being unwilling to pass for exhibition sequences which appear to be in any way defamatory to living persons. This film shows the activities of certain named people in Germany during the war and continues by showing the present activities of these persons. This material has the appearance of being defamatory only if both parts are shown. The Board had no objection to the film showing the war-time activities of the persons concerned, and by removing information about their present employment and whereabouts no indication is given that they are in fact living persons. Cinema audiences in this country are unlikely to know these people by name and know therefore that they are living persons. By deleting references to their present day activities the matter is at least left in doubt.

I cannot accept that the deletions would be "little short of an insult to the memory of Anne Frank and the millions of innocent victims who were murdered in Nazi concentration camps". We have raised no objection to any film showing the dreadful things that the Nazis did and I can assure you that we feel as strongly as you do about the people who were responsible.

Yours sincerely,
John Trevelyan

Do You Want to see the Uncut Version of this Film?

The full and uncensored version of this shocking film is available in England in 16 mm and 35 mm versions with English commentary for club and organisation showing at a very modest hiring fee from:

Plato Films Ltd
18 Greek Street
London W. 1

YANK "FOREIGN LEGION" IN WEST GERMANY

An American "Foreign Legion" composed of emigrants from eastern Europe is being trained in West Germany for sabotage attacks on the socialist states, the West German newspaper "Fuldaer Volkszeitung" has disclosed.

Here are some extracts from an article on the "Foreign Legion" published by this West German paper on August 18th:

". . . It is for partisan battles behind the enemy lines — and only for that purpose — that the men of the American Tenth Special Forces Group are being trained somewhere in Bavaria . . .

"These soldiers have been in Bavaria since 1953. This fact has been common knowledge for some time, as well as the fact that they, or at least their parents, come from Russia, Poland, the Baltic states or the countries of the Balkans — that they are a sort of American Foreign Legion . . .

"The men of the 10th Special Forces Group wear green berets which they buy with their own money . . . The white scarves they wear are decorated with easily understandable pictures describing how to use a Russian machine pistol, blow up a bridge and derail a train.

"The commander of the unit, Colonel Michael Paulick, has the face of a boxer . . . The colonel's name shows that he comes from a family whose home was originally in eastern Europe. His soldiers also come either directly from eastern and south-eastern Europe or from families from these countries. Some, whose families still live behind the Iron Curtain, use a false name.

". . . Shortly after hostilities begin several American planes will fly off in an easterly direction. Somewhere over large wooded areas these planes will fly fairly low, and then men with parachutes will jump out . . . A short time later, Soviet military commanders will discover that strategically important bridges are being exploded and that everywhere saboteurs are at work . . ."

WEST GERMAN CALL-UP FOR 37-YEAR-OLDS

Since early August, local West German authorities have been registering all men born in the year 1922 for possible military service in the West German Wehrmacht or in a "territorial army" independent of NATO. As a result, a wave of bitterness culminating in mass protest meetings in many cities and villages has struck West Germany, and the popularity of Defence Minister Franz-Josef Strauss has reached an all-time low.

The registration has caused especial indignation because many 37-year-olds who were ordered to appear were men who lost limbs or had been otherwise incapacitated during the war; many mothers received such orders for their sons who never returned from the battlefronts. But also among the estimated 320,000 survivors of one of the most decimated groups of veterans of the Hitler war of conquest, indignation is wide-spread.

Some of their opinions were published in the "Hamburger Morgenpost":

"We all learnt better at a heavy enough price during the last World War". (signed) Heinz Dieckman and five other signers.

"Rather the penitentiary than this disgusting business." — Horst Schrader.

"For myself, I have decided on the basis of what I went through to go to be registered only under police compulsion — and then lying down in handcuffs." — Martin Kroecher.

Minister Strauss tried in vain to still the storm by saying that the registration itself was only meant to find out how many of the 37-year-olds were available for service, and that probably less than 10% would actually be conscripted — especially the old officers and non-commissioned officers.

Peace Work Project

An international work camp for youth will help build a carbide factory in Schkopau in Democratic Germany. Young Polish, Rumanian and Bulgarian volunteers will soon join the Hungarian volunteers now working with German youth at the project. In exchange, a similar youth project in Bulgaria with German participation has recently begun work.

A LOCAL PAPER & THE GDR

Newspapers in all parts of the western world often print the most astonishingly inaccurate reports about conditions in the German Democratic Republic. Some of these papers, particularly local papers, are sometimes willing to print letters from readers correcting the wide-spread misconceptions. The following extracts from the "Cambridge Daily News" show what can be done in this respect:

"'There is little anti-British feeling in Berlin', the City M. P. Sir Hamilton Kerr, said in London last night ... 'East Berlin is so poor and miserable compared to the West', said Sir Hamilton 'that Westerners had no fear of Communist competition ...'"

("Cambridge Daily News" May 29th 1959)

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"Sir,

Your report in today's paper of a statement by Sir Hamilton Kerr on his visit to Berlin ... demands comment.

Sir Hamilton was in Berlin as a result, it seems, of Moral Rearmament's promptings; their inspirer's 'Thank God for Hitler' should not be forgotten.

At the same time I was lucky enough to be driving my car 1500 miles through the German Democratic Republic as the result of an invitation from a Jena University lecturer who was in Cambridge last summer. I travelled all over the place, stayed in many private houses, visited four universities, factories, educational institutions, housing estates and villages.

There is no doubt that compared with the West, East Germany seems at first drab, the roads are poor, and the shells of war-damaged buildings are left untouched until something new is to be built on the site. The result is the extraordinary sight of the Unter den Linden of the Brandenburger Tor with the flourishing Humboldt University and the ruined skeletons of great buildings round it. But it would be foolish in the extreme to base a judgement of East German progress on these superficial aspects. An enormous flat and house building programme is in progress and the rents are cheap, the interiors are most modern, even if the architectural exterior is utilitarian.

The food consumed in the ordinary family and in restaurants is enormous in quantity if not quite so varied as ours. Clothes and domestic articles in the shops all over the Republic bear comparison with standards of most English working class shopping areas.

What is missing is the glamour and style and lights of fashionable shopping quarters. But medical and educational provision in towns and villages and directly in the factories is greatly in advance even of our advanced British provision. East Berlin is not the show window that West Berlin has been made into. But East German competition is already real and going to be much more so in the next few years. It may be some time before a Mayfair standard of living is reached but a Co-op one may soon be surpassed. It is of no help to anyone to evade this real challenge of Communist competition.

Whether Sir Hamilton's party likes it or not, it represents a fact of the contemporary world which we are going to have to live with for the next ten years unless we prefer to commit nuclear suicide.

Yours faithfully,
Lionel M. Mumby.

("Cambridge Daily News" June 2nd 1959)

Life in Europe's Problem City

By Alison Tennant, Vice-Chairman of the European Union of Women

"... In the East all is dead and drap. There is virtually no traffic; the occasional tram or bicycle need no traffic lights or policeman on point duty. The windows of the little shops are all boarded up, because little shops have been taxed out of existence; there are just two vast state concerns: Konsum for food and H.O. — Handels (Trade) Organisation — for everything else.

The streets seem deserted even of people, though life in many of their flats can hardly be attractive, for the best of the bombed buildings are still in use, patched up ...

Only the party ticket gives entry to the 5000 new flats built since the war, all in Stalinallee ...

("Cambridge Daily News", June 5th 1959)

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"Sir,

I am sorry to be a bore, but really Alison Tennant's stale propaganda stories won't do for a university town like Cambridge. We must see the world as it is if we are going to form valid opinions about international affairs. Don't let's substitute for the rosy spectacles of Socialist Utopia the smoked glass of Western German propaganda ...

There are fewer and poorer cars in East Germany than in West Berlin, but don't let's exaggerate — there are cars and hoards of motor bikes as well as 'the occasional tram or bicycle'.

I saw many flourishing 'little shops' in East Berlin and in the rest of East Germany ...

Stalinallee may have been the first block of new flats built since the war, but there are now many more in East Berlin. The suggestion 'that only the Party ticket gives entry to housing' is just nonsense, as I verified in the houses and flats I stayed in and visited. State housing is allotted on the basis of work, family needs, and present housing ...

Yours truly,
Lionel Munby.

("Cambridge Daily News" June 8th 1959)

N. B. We have printed these four extracts from the "Cambridge Daily News" not only for their intrinsic interest; but because we believe that they may show many readers in different parts of the world what they can do to help correct the distorted picture of the German Democratic Republic which is so widespread.

If you see a silly article about Democratic Germany, why not write a letter to the editor correcting it? If you want the facts, and have not got them at your finger-tips, write to us, and we shall try to provide them. If you do not feel like replying yourself, then please send us a clipping of the article, not forgetting the date and the name of the paper, and we shall, if the case warrants it, write either direct to the paper concerned or comment in the columns of GERMAN REPORT. When replying to distortions, it is important to remember that a generalised slander such as "East Germans are unfree" is difficult to refute; a specific lie such as that quoted above "the windows of the little shops are all boarded up" is much easier to deal with. The answer to this particular lie is impressive and convincing: there are 233,000 retail shops in Democratic Germany. 152,000 of them are privately owned. For East Berlin, the figures are 15,000 shops, 10,000 of which are private.

Address queries and the clippings to

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BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

On a visit to Britain recently, I found that quite a number of people there still suffer from the illusion that "The Guardian", formerly the "Manchester Guardian", is a reliable paper. Its dispatches from some places may in fact be true, but I regret to say that the Guardian correspondent in West Germany is keeping up his reputation as a man simply unable to facts right.

Fumbled Facts

I am not referring here to questions of interpretation, but of simple and easily ascertainable facts. Here is a little evidence from the "Guardian" dated September 5th. The Bonn correspondent writes:

"The East German 'historian' Professor Jerusalimski, has today produced the official East German explanation of the Hitler-Stalin pact of 1939. According to the professor, who is chairman of the East German Historical Association . . ."

In fact Professor A. S. Yerusalimski is a noted Soviet historian, and he is chairman of the Soviet Section of the Historians' Commission of the GDR and USSR.

On the same page of the same issue, the same correspondent manages to get some more facts wrong. He writes:

"The East and West Germans have at long last been able to agree on some form of union, even though it only applies to the composition of an all-German ski-team for the 1960 Olympics in Squaw Valley . . . The East and West German Ski Associations reached an agreement — the first all-German agreement since 1945 — on the composition of their joint team —"

Imaginative

The statement that this is the "first all-German agreement since 1945" is so idiotic that it is difficult to see how even so imaginative a correspondent as the "Guardian" man in Bonn managed to think it up.

There are not enough all-German agreements, that is true, but there have been agreements at all sorts of levels between the two halves of the country ever since the two German states were established in 1949. There is, for instance, the agreement on trade between the two German states, first concluded in 1950 and renewed every year since, which today covers a trade exchange amounting to something like £100 million annually; there are the agreements on rail traffic, postal communications and so on. And in the field of sport the "Guardian" correspondent should really be able to remember that an All-German team, composed of athletes from both German states, attended the 1956 Olympics; such a team could only be constituted after agreement between the Olympic Committees of the two states.

Really, "The Guardian" should do better. In a recent issue of the newspaper trade journal "World's Press News" I noticed a really gorgeous mock-medical advertisement with the banner headline "The Guardian's '2-Way Action' promises you too relief from Shoddy Thinking". I would be more assured of the success if "The Guardian" itself would guard against Shoddy Writing.

Figures

Since this issue of GERMAN REPORT will be reaching readers in Britain in the midst of the general election campaign, it might be of interest to quote some figures on the composition of the People's Chamber, the parliament of the German Democratic Republic.

The official statistical yearbook of the Democratic Republic shows that there are 352 men and 114 women in the People's Chamber. 286 of the M.P.s are workers, 36 peasants, 57 white collar workers, 42 craftsmen, and 41 "intellectuals" which means lawyers, doctors, journalists, etc. The list is rounded off with two clergymen, and two employers. If anyone is surprised to find employers in the parliament of a socialist state, this is a good place to point out that about 8% of industrial production today comes from privately-owned factories.

Blister

We get all sorts of odd letters in this office from all parts of the world, and we manage to cope with correspondence in quite a variety of languages, though I must admit that we were stumped lately when an Irish reader addressed us in Erse. But sometimes more difficult than an out-of-the-way language is a letter written in English obviously with the aid of a dictionary. A letter has just arrived from one of the Arab countries stating "I was very pleased when I hear about Democratic German Report and I will be very glad to receive this blister." I can only assume that there is some word for "newspaper" in Arabic which is very similar to the word for "blister". Perhaps some Arabic expert can enlighten us. In any case we are sending the applicant the paper, and I only wish that I could write such reasonably understandable Arabic, even with the aid of a dictionary.

Exhibit

Readers in London and the Home Counties who want to know more about the German Democratic Republic will have a good opportunity in the next week or two. All they have to do is to go to The Royal Hotel, Woburn Place, London W. C. 1, where the exhibition "Life in the GDR" is open until October 13th. There will be daily film shows at the exhibition, which is open from 10 a. m. until 8.00 p. m. Entrance is free. Music lovers can hear the Symphony Orchestra and Choir of Berlin Radio at the Royal Festival Hall, London. On Sunday October 4th they are presenting Beethoven's "Missa Solemnis" and on October 5th Handel's "Belshazzar" Oratorium.

And London readers might like to make a note in their diaries that on October 25th they will be able to see the thrilling documentary film "The German Story" for a season at the State Cinema, Leytonstone. It is showing together with a completely new film on the German Democratic Republic, called "The New Germany" (I have not seen this myself yet, so I cannot tell you whether it is good, bad, or indifferent), and original nazi newsreels of the bombing of London and Coventry.

Unrecorded

It may be of some interest to record a hitherto unrecorded episode from the biography of Heinrich Luebke, second President of West Germany, who has just taken office. During the war he worked as a leading official on the construction of the Peenemuende Research Station, where the nazis built their buzz-bombs and V 2 rockets. This should endear him to the people of London if he ever pays a visit. And he has just commissioned Dr Hans Eiche, unreconstructed former nazi party member, to write his official biography.

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